

Serial No. : 10/604,561
Applicants : Gerald L. Dykstra et al.
Response to Office Action : Mailed From USPTO on 01/25/2006
Page : 2

The listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 5 and 16-18.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of at least partially disassembling a pallet, the pallet having a plurality of deck board support interfaces, said deck board support interfaces arranged in rows and columns with at least three deck board support interfaces in each row and each column, said method comprising:

providing at least one cutting device that is positionable at any one of the deck board support interfaces, said at least one cutting device comprising a pair of arms having first and second opposite end portions and a pair of shearing blades each mounted at said first end portion of one of said arms, wherein each of said pair of arms is rotably mounted;

selectively positioning said at least one cutting device adjacent a particular deck board support interface of the pallet; and

cutting fasteners at the particular deck board support interface with said at least one cutting device without the necessity of cutting fasteners at other deck board support interfaces in the row and the column in which the particular deck board support interface is located, said cutting including selectively moving said shearing blades toward each other including rotating said pair of arms, said rotating including applying a force moving said second end portions of said pair of arms apart.

2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said providing at least one cutting device comprises providing a pair of shearing blades.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said providing at least one cutting device comprises providing at least one air chisel.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Serial No. : 10/604,561
Applicants : Gerald L. Dykstra et al.
Response to Office Action : Mailed From USPTO on 01/25/2006
Page : 3

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said providing at least one cutting device comprises providing at least one diamond wire.

5. (Currently Amended) A pallet dismantler for disassembling a pallet having a plurality of deck board support interfaces, said dismantler comprising:

at least one shearing assembly comprising a pair of arms having first and second opposite end portions, and a pair of shearing blades, each mounted at ~~asaid first~~ end portion of one of said arms, wherein each of said pair of arms is pivotally mounted at a pivot assembly, said pivot assembly positioned between said first and second end portions, said shearing assembly is adapted to selectively position said shearing blades at substantially any one of the deck board support interfaces of a pallet including straddling any other deck board support interface between the one of the deck board support interfaces and said pivot; and

said at least one shearing assembly including an actuator ~~operating on~~, said actuator selectively applying a force moving said second end portions of said pair of arms apart to rotate said pair of arms about said pivot assembly to selectively move said shearing blades toward each other with a force sufficient to shear fasteners at a deck board support interface of a pallet.

6. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5, wherein said at least one shearing assembly comprises at least three shearing assemblies.

7. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 6, wherein at least two of said at least three shearing assemblies are adjustably positioned with respect to others of said at least three shearing assemblies.

8. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5, includes a pallet support surface below said at least one shearing assembly.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Serial No. : 10/604,561
Applicants : Gerald L. Dykstra et al.
Response to Office Action : Mailed From USPTO on 01/25/2006
Page : 4

9. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 8 wherein said at least one shearing assembly is spaced above said support surface sufficiently to support a pallet from said at least one shearing assembly whereby said pair of shearing blades is self-aligning with a deck board support interface of a pallet.

10. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 8, wherein said pallet support surface spaces an operator sufficiently from said at least one shearing assembly to limit operator contact with said shearing blades.

11. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5, wherein said actuator comprises a hydraulic actuator.

12. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5, wherein said actuator comprises an electrical actuator.

13. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5, wherein said actuator selectively moves said shearing blades toward each other with a force of at least approximately 2,000 pounds.

14. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5, wherein said actuator selectively moves said shearing blades toward each other with a force of at least approximately 4,000 pounds.

15. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 5 includes a safety cover covering at least a portion of said at least one shearing assemblies.

16. (Currently Amended) A pallet dismantler for disassembling a pallet having a plurality of deck board support interfaces, said dismantler comprising:

three pairs of arms, three pairs of shearing blades, each of said blades mounting at an end portion of one of said arms, three ~~pairs of pivot pin assemblies~~, each of said ~~pin pivot assemblies~~ pivotally mounting one of said pair of arms, three actuators each positioned at another end portion of one of said pair of arms wherein said pivot ~~pin assemblies~~ are between the respective

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Serial No. : 10/604,561
Applicants : Gerald L. Dykstra et al.
Response to Office Action : Mailed From USPTO on 01/25/2006
Page : 5

said shearing blades and one of said actuators, wherein each of said actuators forces said another end portion of the corresponding one of said pair of arms apart to rotate the corresponding pair of arms and force the corresponding shearing blades toward each other, said pairs of arms having central portions between said shearing blades and said pivot ~~pin~~assemblies, said central portions adapted to straddle a deck board support interface when the corresponding pair of shearing blades is positioned at another deck board support interface; and

a control system, said control system having operator switches for individually enabling said actuators to substantially simultaneously selectively actuating any or all of said actuators.

17. (Currently Amended) The dismantler of Claim 16, wherein said blades are positioned at least approximately 30 inches from the respective one of said ~~pin~~pivot assemblies.

18. (Currently Amended) The dismantler of Claim 16, wherein at least two of said ~~pin~~pivot assemblies are adjustably positioned with respect to others of said pins.

19. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 16 including bumpers between each pair of arms to limit motion of said arms.

20. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 16 including a pallet support surface below said arms.

21. (Original) The dismantler of claim 20, wherein said shearing blades are sufficiently spaced above said support surface to support a pallet from said shearing blades whereby said shearing blades are self-aligning with deck board support interfaces of a pallet.

22. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 16, wherein said pallet support surface positions an operator at least approximately 30 inches from said shearing blades.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Serial No. : 10/604,561
Applicants : Gerald L. Dykstra et al.
Response to Office Action : Mailed From USPTO on 01/25/2006
Page : 6

23. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 16 including a safety cover covering portions of said three pair of arms including said pivot pins and said actuators.

24. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 16, wherein said control system comprises at least in part a hydraulic control system.

25. (Original) The dismantler of Claim 16, wherein said control system comprises at least in part an electrical control system.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY